

Washington, DC -- Congressman Vern Buchanan voted last night for a bipartisan bill to expand veterans' education benefits. Buchanan is an original cosponsor of the "Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act" (H.R. 5740) to provide U.S. service men and women who have served in active duty since September 11, 2001 with additional education benefits similar to those provided in the original post-World War II G.I. Bill.

"Since World War II, the G.I. bill has helped veterans readjust to civilian life and get a college education when they returned home," said Buchanan. "But the current program does not cover today's cost of a college education. Furthermore, it doesn't give members of the National Guard and Reserves, many of whom have served multiple tours of duty in Iraq and Afghanistan, with equal benefits. This bill brings the G.I. bill into the 21st century by expanding educational benefits available to enlisted men and women as well as citizen soldiers."

The "Iraq/Afghanistan Supplemental Appropriations Act" (H.R. 2642) increases education benefits to provide veterans who enlisted after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 with tuition, books, fees, and other trainings costs and provide Florida veterans with a monthly stipend of \$1,309. Veterans, including members of the Reserve and National Guard who have served at least two years of active duty would qualify for the benefit. Furthermore, the bill allows qualified military personnel to transfer unused GI education benefits to their spouses or children.

The supplemental funding bill also gives our troops fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan the resources they need to succeed in their mission and return home safely. Furthermore, it requires that federal funding for the reconstruction of Iraq be matched dollar for dollar by the Iraqi government.

"We have brave men and women who are serving at great sacrifice," said Buchanan. "They deserve the support of the American people. But Iraq should use its oil revenues to pay for the U.S. military presence and improvements to Iraq's infrastructure."

Buchanan is a cosponsor of H.Res. 1108 expressing the sense of the House that future Iraq reconstruction should be paid for by the Government of Iraq.

Finally, the supplemental funding bill provides a 13-week extension of unemployment insurance for all states.